

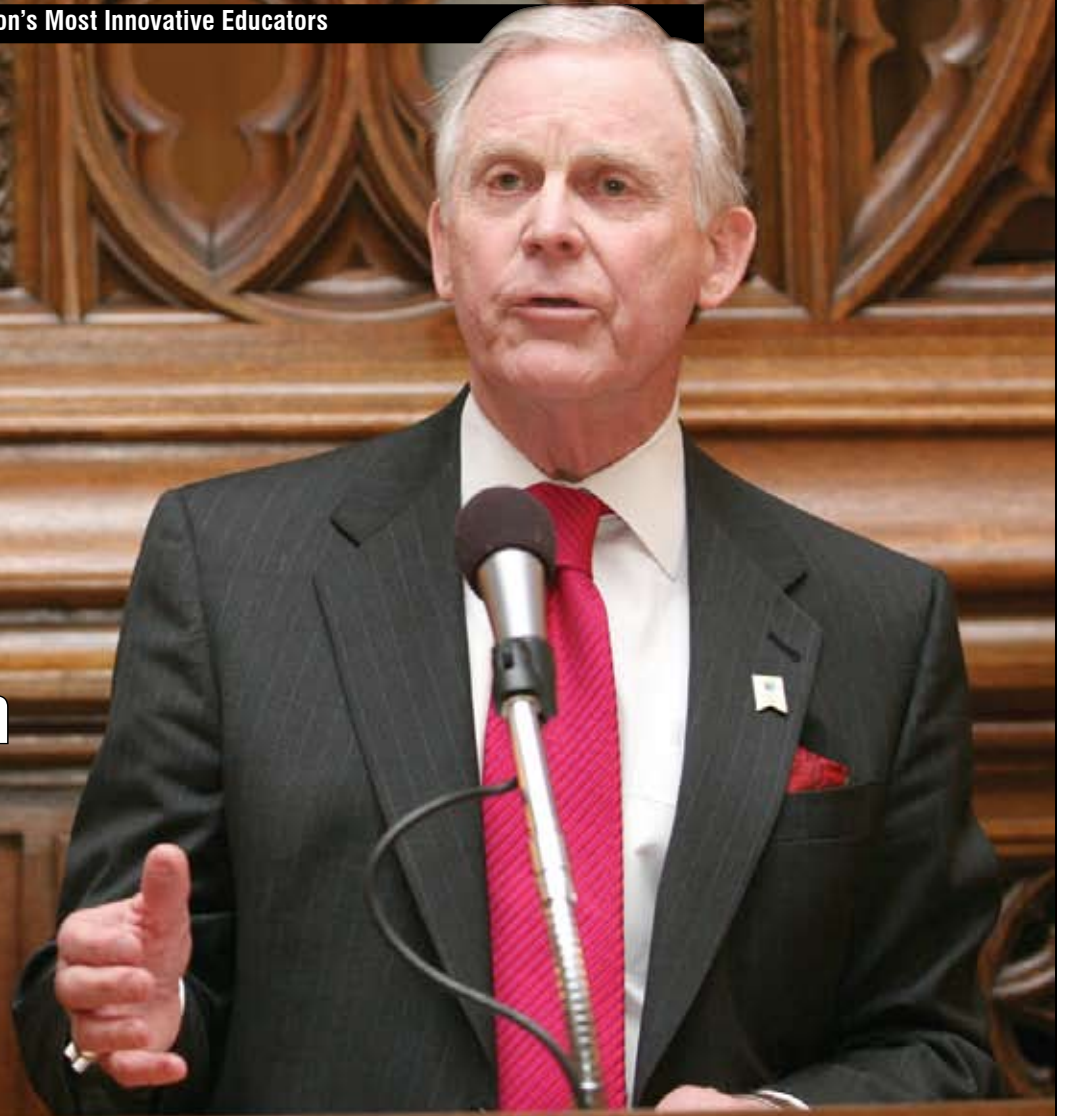
Kentucky Teacher

February 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

Jon Draud Commissioner of Education

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News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Jon Draud, Kentucky's fourth commissioner of education, talks with school superintendents, legislators and Kentucky Department of Education staff during a reception in his honor in early January at the historic Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort.

Talk to the Experts ...

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Electronic listservs continue to be communication tools for educators

For nearly 15 years, Kentucky educators have had the ability to communicate with colleagues in other districts about core content, lesson plans and professional topics by using the KERA Professional LISTSERVs. The listservs, supported by the University of Kentucky, have become vital electronic communication tools for educators throughout the state.

The listservs allow teachers, administrators and students to communicate via e-mail with groups of people about specific education-related topics, said William E. Stilwell III, who has affectionately been called "the father of the listservs." Stilwell is a retired UK counseling psychology professor who is serving as director of Graduate Studies in the Educational and Counseling Psychology Department and as one of the developers for the College of Education Web site.

Stilwell opened the first listserv in the early 1990s for library media specialists. The listserv (KYLMS) now boasts 870 subscribers.

Early in the listserv development, Stilwell also created communication tools for superintendents (KYSUPT) and district technology coordinators (KYDTC). As more educators heard about the KERA Professional LISTSERV, the number of groups increased.

"In the beginning, superintendents would wrestle (in e-mail conversations) with the best ways to address a variety of topics, for instance pay for part-time teachers and to organize student transportation," said Stilwell. "We opened KYTRANS for directors of pupil transportation to talk with one another by e-mail. We opened KYSPED and related special education listservs for fairly specific groups. KHSAA has asked for a set of listservs for each of its sports. Football coaches are very active users for scheduling spring practices and pre-season scrimmages."

As of August 2007, there were 39,241 subscribed addresses to the listservs. That's a 34.26 percent increase from the 29,360 subscribers in 2005 and a 79.83 percent increase from the 21,921 subscribers in 2003.

"I was not impressed until we had more than 20,000 subscribers – exceeding the seating capacity at Rupp Arena," Stilwell said.

The 146 listservs provide networking opportunities for educators in nearly every content area, a variety of sports, some software user groups and several professional education organizations. District assessment coordinators, food service directors and personnel directors have listservs. KYSTLP for members of the Student Technology Leader-

ship Program has nearly 1,000 subscribers.

Some educators are not interested in receiving large quantities of e-mail every day. However, they want to see the messages and learning what other educators are talking about in their specific content area or professional organization.

For these educators, there are options. They can subscribe to receive a digest of daily postings to the specific listserv. An "oral history" feature allows them to read discussions among the group that are archived by month.

Additionally, the chief information officers for many school districts have subscribed to certain listservs and created folders of "listserv subscriptions" in the public folders of Microsoft Exchange, the e-mail program used in school districts. Teachers and administrators can access all the information shared by those listservs without receiving all the e-mails.

The listservs and a description of the subscriber groups are posted on the KERA Professional LISTSERVs Web page (www.uky.edu/education/kylists.html). The subscription procedure is simple, and both school and private e-mail addresses can be used to subscribe. The Web site also provides directions

to unsubscribe from a list.

David Couch, associate commissioner for the Kentucky Department of Education's Office of Education Technology, said the KETS Global List also provides nearly 250 distribution lists for groups of educators to communicate through e-mail. The commissioner of education uses distribution lists, like "ALL State Supts," "ALL State Prin" and "ALL State Teachers," to send messages to those groups.

Many districts also have established local distribution lists that allow teachers to easily communicate with district educators by grade level or content or with educators in statewide programs like Read to Achieve.

District chief information officers can archive the messages of these distribution lists in the public folders on Microsoft Exchange, Couch said. Anyone in the district would then have access to the messages.

Stilwell said he has received "spontaneous praise and thank yous from educators far and wide on the value of the listservs. Our goal always has been to have a representative from each district or from each building on a KERA Professional LISTSERV!"

MORE INFO ...

www.uky.edu/education/kylists.html



Photo by Amy Wallot

Getting ready for air time

Fifth-graders Hanna Knotts, left, and Hailee Lampley look over the show line-up for "WSLE Morning Update" before the video broadcast of announcements at South Livingston Elementary (Livingston County). Working out of the school's television studio, students in the school's Media Club learn every aspect of television production through hands-on assignments.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Jon Draud, Commissioner of Education

We must gather a sense of urgency about reaching proficiency in 2014

This is my first column in *Kentucky Teacher* since taking office in December. I want to take the opportunity to introduce myself.

I have worked for nearly 38 years in Kentucky public schools. I have been a classroom teacher, coach, principal, superintendent and school board member.

I was in the trenches as a superintendent during the early years of education reform. From 1990 to 1997, I was working with three school faculties in Ludlow Independent Schools to make the necessary changes in our curriculum and instruction that would improve student achievement. I know the value of instructional leadership.

I was an associate professor of education at Northern Kentucky University and have worked with teachers seeking National Board Certification. I've been involved in education research as a member of the Southern Regional Education Board of Directors. I know the importance of preparing high-quality teachers for tomorrow's classrooms.

While at the university, I worked with many programs that encourage public school/university partnerships and provide ways for community groups to get involved in education. I hosted a regional public affairs TV talk show about education. I know the value of using a variety of means to involve parents, local residents, and business and community leaders in our schools.

I have been a member of several Scholastic Audit teams. I've seen first-hand what's going on in some of our lower-performing schools and helped make recommendations for their improvement. I know the value of programs like the Highly Skilled Educators, the Voluntary Partnership Assistant Team and the Commonwealth School Improvement Funds. I will continue to support adequate funding for these school-improvement programs.

When I left the education profession, I did so to become involved in education issues at the state level. As a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives, I was vice chairman of the House Education Committee as we worked with the Kentucky Board of Education to move from the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) to the Commonwealth Accountability Test-

ing System (CATS). I know the importance of bringing together diverse thinkers to reach consensus on what is best for Kentucky's education system.

In short, I have been deeply involved in public education all my life. I bring all my experiences to this job. I am excited to be able to provide the leadership needed for Kentucky public schools to reach proficiency by 2014.

It is an honor to be your new commissioner, and I pledge to do my best to support the work each of you is doing for the children in your classrooms and for Kentucky public schools.

Focus on the future

Kentucky has made much progress since the inception of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. It's because of your hard work that we continue to make progress toward proficiency. I thank you for your hard work.

However, we must continue to focus on the future and gather a sense of urgency about reaching proficiency by 2014. We must remain dedicated to the work that will make sure all students in our schools will become well-educated and productive citizens.

To reach proficiency in a state that continues to be hampered by poverty, the state board and I will be working to provide programs and services that will diminish barriers to student learning – no matter how daunting these barriers appear to be. Our most-capable students must be prepared to compete in the global arena and so must our most-challenged students.

We know the 2009-10 budget, which the General Assembly is setting during this winter session, will be lean. However, I assure you that I will work with Gov. Steve Beshear and the legislature to get education's share of the available dollars. It is vital for our schools to have the resources they need to accomplish our state goal.

I believe that all children can learn. Kentucky educators are given the awesome responsibility of providing opportunities for all children to realize that expectation. I am beginning to take a hard look at the department's resources to make sure they are being used to best meet the needs of teachers and our students.

Reignite excitement of reform

I feel a sense of urgency to reignite excitement

among Kentucky's education stakeholders. In the early days of education reform, Kentuckians at every level were enthusiastic about changing public education in the state.

As we've seen Kentucky public schools improve and rise in national rankings, that widespread support and enthusiasm have waned. The accomplishments of some schools have fostered apathy among supporters for the work that remains to be accomplished in other schools.

We need to bring back the enthusiasm of Kentucky's business and industry leaders that we had in the early days of education reform. We need to continue energizing parents, community leaders and our education partners to support and get involved in our public schools.

I plan to be the person to make that happen. I will call upon my professional experiences to help refocus widespread support for providing a world-class education for every Kentucky student.

The local P-16 councils are proving to be extremely valuable in fostering community involvement in education. Participants are

researching local needs and creating programs that link all levels of education with work-force and economic-development needs and foster new partnerships between public schools and postsecondary institutions and economic-development leadership. I plan to see how we can capitalize on what has been done and expand these councils into other areas of the state.

I also am determined to replicate the successful northern Kentucky "Champions for Education" initiative in every region of the state. With local education stakeholders working together on public education issues, we will find solutions for preparing our students for success in the global economy and gain widespread support for those initiatives.

I want to create an environment that will enable us – the department, state board, teachers, administrators, parents, community leaders, legislators and students – to achieve academic improvement. I believe through the collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders we will reach our 2014 goal!

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Draud at jon.draud@education.ky.gov.)



Draud



Photo by Amy Wallot

Clarifying an assignment

Karen Schulz, left, an elementary teacher at the Kentucky School for the Deaf in Danville, helps student Ashley Puckett understand a writing assignment before the 4th-grader begins writing. Kentucky public school students write at all grade levels and across all content areas in a variety of forms, conventions and styles to communicate ideas and information about what they have learned. These writing pieces are collected at grades 4, 7 and 12 into a writing portfolio for assessment as part of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS).

Budget for 2009-10 proposed to give flexibility to districts

By Faun S. Fishback

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"It's amazing how your perspective changes when you're in the General Assembly and all of a sudden you become commissioner of education," Kentucky Education Commissioner Jon Draud told a group of public school superintendents and an Internet audience during a budget briefing on Jan. 9 in Frankfort. In the first few months of his tenure as commissioner, Draud, a former state legislator, has been faced with a 3 percent cut to the education budget for the 2007-08 fiscal year and a proposed 12 percent cut for the upcoming biennium (2009-10).

The commissioner held the briefing to explain how those cuts would be handled for the current-year budget and asked for input about where cuts should be proposed for 2009-10. He emphasized that his foremost concern in making any cuts to the education budget has been to make minimal impact on students and instruction.

The 3 percent cut for the remainder of this school year (Fiscal Year 2007-08) will be made by returning to the General Fund money that has not been spent by school districts from the Teachers Professional Growth Fund and the Read to Achieve program.

Department Budget Director Petie Day explained that more than \$10 million has accumulated in the Teachers Professional Growth Fund since the 2005-06 fiscal year. At that time, the use of the fund was changed by the legislature to fund training for teachers and coaches in the Read to Achieve program. Previously, the money was used to reimburse teachers for individual professional development to improve instructional practices.

A little more than \$1.3 million allocated to the Read to Achieve program for Fiscal Year 2005-06 has gone unused by school districts.

Because of a slow start to the Read to Achieve program, not all the allocated money was used during that fiscal year, Day said. Once districts had submitted all expenses to the funds for 2005-06, the department carried forward the unused money in future budgets where it has accumulated with other unused Teachers Professional Growth Fund money and Read to Achieve money, he added.

In subsequent years, the districts drew money from the current allotments and did not use the carry-forward funds.

The commissioner emphasized that by using these carry-forward allotments, no programs for this school year, including the Read to Achieve program, will be affected by the budget cuts requested by Gov. Steve Beshear for the current fiscal year. Read to Achieve



Photo by Amy Wallot

Preschool students at Hogsett Elementary (Danville Independent) follow music teacher Sheri Duncan's lead as they sing "B-I-N-G-O" and mark the beat with wooden sticks. The proposed budget submitted to Gov. Steve Beshear does not contain cuts to Kentucky's preschool program.

funds will be part of the department's education budget request for 2009-10, Draud said.

Input on 2009-10 budget

Commissioner Draud began the discussion of school funding for the next two years by explaining that the governor has asked the Department of Education to prepare a budget that reflects a 12 percent reduction (about \$46 million) in the 2009-10 state education budget. Before proposing such a budget, the commissioner asked superintendents to provide information on the impact a 7 percent cut to Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) funding program would have on programs in their districts.

SEEK is a formula-driven allocation of state funds to local school districts. SEEK money is used to fund transportation costs and provide services for special needs students in addition to a per pupil base calculated by district.

A number of themes emerged from the request, all of which the school leaders felt would be detrimental to students:

- Loss of more instructional positions, instructional assistants and curriculum specialists would hinder efforts to improve student achievement.
- Many art, music, physical education and world language classes would be eliminated in many districts.
- Many districts would have to eliminate full-day kindergarten.
- Allocations for school supplies, including high school textbooks, would be reduced.

The commissioner reiterated at that time the governor was not proposing cuts to SEEK.

"Our major objective in the 2009-10 budget is to have the least amount of impact on school districts and the children of this state," Draud said. "I know there is usually not a lot of empathy and sympathy for the Department of Education, but I was not aware of this when I became commissioner. Since 2001, this department has lost 219 positions and most likely will lose another 28 with this current reduction, if it occurs. So it does make it difficult for this agency to provide the kind of services the department wants to provide to the school districts if you lose 219 positions over a six- or seven-year period."

With that, the commissioner said the department leadership team had suggested cuts to the budget. While the cuts will be to the department's budget and not SEEK, they still will have an impact on school districts, he explained.

After discussing the proposed cuts, superintendents from across the state weighed in on how they felt those cuts would affect their districts' operations and services. The budget proposal that the Department of Education gave to the governor proposes to make the 12 percent reduction in Flexible Focus Funds, which will allow superintendents flexibility in how to spend their districts' allocation to meet local needs.

The 12 percent cuts will come from nearly \$12.7 million for textbooks, nearly \$8.8 mil-

lion for professional development, \$18.3 million for Extended School Services and slightly more than \$6 million for safe schools programs. Preschool funding, which is part of the Flexible Focus Funds, was not cut in the proposed budget.

Draud continued to emphasize to the superintendents and department staff that submitting the budget proposal with reductions in services is part of the early process of preparing the state budget. The Governor's Office of Policy and Management used budget proposals from all state agencies to finalize the budget Gov. Beshear presented to the legislature on Jan. 29.

Calling on his experience as a legislator, Draud said once the legislature received the budget, the House can make changes to the budget before sending it to the

Senate, where changes also can occur. Nothing is final until the House and Senate agree upon a budget through a conference committee. Their budget is then sent to the governor for signature or veto. The General Assembly can override the governor's veto by a majority of both houses.

Draud assured superintendents and department staff that he will be advocating for "the least negative impact on education during these tough economic times."

Because this is a 60-day session of the General Assembly, it may be mid-April before the budget process is complete for the 2009-10 budget.

Teachers and administrators interested in following the budget can access a variety of electronic programming from Kentucky Educational Television on its Web site or through KET coverage of the General Assembly. A list of programming is available on KET's Web site (www.ket.org/legislature).

The Legislative Research Commission also provides links on its Web site (www.lrc.state.ky.us) to timely information about the General Assembly. Links also are available to send e-mail to or phone legislators, access the "2008 Legislative Record" that provides information about bill status and review "Capitol Notes," a regularly updated Web log of legislative news.

MORE INFO ...

www.ket.org/legislature
www.lrc.state.ky.us

ACT prep enriches instruction at Marion County High School

By Matthew Tungate

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Carol Stayton is more than just an English teacher at Marion County High School – she is also the parent of a 10th-grade student at the school. So she was excited when she found out she and her fellow teachers would be trained to prepare students for the ACT, the national college admission and placement test.

“I recognize the importance of the ACT in my son’s future, and I certainly want him to have quality instruction and do well on the test. A student’s ACT score makes a huge impact on his or her future as far as getting into colleges and earning scholarships,” Stayton said. “So as a parent, I definitely want my child to have this training.”

Marion County High School is providing ACT preparation using materials from Kaplan, a leading educational services company, for all of its 11th-grade students. All Kentucky 11th-graders will take the ACT on March 11.

The ACT Index will be computed from the ACT results and results from PLAN, which was administered to all 10th-graders last fall. The ACT Index will count 5 percent of high school accountability for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) beginning this school year.

Marion County High School Principal Taylora Schlosser said her staff has always worked on a viable curriculum that includes ACT strands. But for this year, the school council requested that the Marion County School Board spend \$27,000 for Kaplan instructional materials and training, which it did.

Kaplan charged Marion County Schools \$99 per 11th-grade student and \$2,700 for professional development, Schlosser said. Students received Kaplan prep workbooks with flash cards. Twenty-three teachers – all mathematics, science and English teachers and some special education teachers – were taught Kaplan’s prescribed way of ACT prep during a five-hour training, Schlosser said.

“If you use what they do, it’s step by step, whereas now in Kentucky you have the core content, you decide how you want to deliver that instruction,” she said.

The staff has been very receptive to the additional training, Schlosser said. “This just gave them more tools in their toolbox they could use,” she said.

Kaplan gives test-taking tips and also teaches content, Schlosser said. Kaplan’s student workbooks have exercises that include tips on how to deal with similar questions, she said.

“We have not found anything outside the

core content. We’re not going to do it for the sake of testing. You can’t tell me that working on punctuation and grammar or science reasoning won’t help,” she said. “We are integrating that into everything we teach every day.”

English teacher Laurie Followell said she has incorporated ACT questions in her class for the last 10 years of her 18-year career. She even has tutored students for the test after school. She said the Kaplan training has helped her be a better teacher.

“It kind of opened my eyes to some specific things that I needed to cover in my content to make a better English student, and it really made me more aware of reading comprehension skills,” she said.

Science Department Head Felicia Sanchez said she had forgotten that science questions on the ACT are reasoning, such as looking at graphs and charts. “What I took out of that training was noticing the types of questions I should be asking in my classes to get them ready for the ACT,” she said. “So, we’ve been working on a lot of graphs and charts and interpreting data. I totally changed the type of questioning I’ve been asking in my class because of that training.”

She incorporates ACT questions in daily tasks, such as introductory units, and includes them on tests. “So I take the content we’re learning from the unit and twist it into ACT-version questioning to kill two birds with one stone,” Sanchez explained.

Kaplan also provided the school with four practice tests (students took three tests by the end of January). The company scored each in about a week, Schlosser said. Results come back with a school profile report that shows the average score and where the majority of students fell in each subject area: reading, science, language and mathematics. Then it further analyzes those numbers to show in which specific knowledge areas students did best and in which they were weakest.

“The best part is that Kaplan gives each student a little summary about how they did and areas of strength and areas of growth,” Schlosser said. “Then it gives them a detailed, individual plan to improve their scores, including which page in the workbook to use or where on the Web site to go.”

She did not know they would be getting such detailed reports and improvement plans for individual students. “That’s been a bonus,” Schlosser said.

It’s also been an advantage for teachers, she



Jodi Tungate, a junior at Marion County High School, has her ACT prep workbook nearby while completing an assignment in Laurie Followell’s English class.

said. Every mathematics, science and English teacher gets individual student scores as well as overall results. “So when teachers are thinking about ACT, they are thinking, ‘Overall, schoolwide these are things we need to work on,’ but then if they’re looking at that child in class and they want to provide any individual instruction, they know exactly what to help them with,” Schlosser said.

Stayton, the English teacher with a son at the school, said she used the results to change what she emphasized in class. “After they had taken a few of the ACT practice tests, I realized that they didn’t understand certain concepts as well as I had thought,” she said. “They (the practice tests) are good assessment tools.”

Schlosser said the school has funding for the Kaplan program for only this year, but she believes students will see results and hopes to get funding for additional years.

“All the things we’re teaching them as we go – test-taking strategies, what’s the best way to read a question, the content that you’re teaching them – I think it’s going to help them on the state test, it’s going to help them on the ACT and, overall, it’s going to help them in their futures,” Schlosser said. “There’s nothing in the content of ACT that’s not going to help us with Kentucky’s Core Content or Program of Studies. I just see it as a win-win for everybody.”

MORE INFO ...

www.kaptest.com/act

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Photos by Amy Wallot

Students in Doug Brown’s chemistry class at Marion County High School refer to their ACT prep workbooks during a class activity. All 11th-graders in Kentucky’s public schools will take the ACT March 11.

Farmington's success is measured in many ways other than test scores

By Susan Riddell

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When people involved with Farmington Elementary School (Graves County) talk about what makes the school stand out, hardly anyone mentions the impressive assessment results that recently helped the school become a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Blue Ribbon School.

Instead, people are more inclined to talk about the school's award-winning principal, its community reading coaches and its family atmosphere.

The Blue Ribbon award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress under the requirements of the NCLB Act.

Two years ago, Farmington's total academic index on the Kentucky Core Content Test was 110.3, achieving proficiency in every subject tested. In 2007, the school's non-adjusted accountability index was 106.5 with no novice learners in the school.

"Our entire faculty and staff go above and beyond trying to reach every child every day," said Debbie Jones, an exiting-primary teacher at Farmington. "We don't give up. We do whatever it takes to make students feel loved and successful. Our hard work shows."

Principal Denise Whitaker said the school's success with test scores occurs because the faculty believes in its students. "We make sure they know we believe in them," she added. "We build a strong work ethic within our students. We celebrate small successes and have fun with students. They want to come to school, and they want to please their teachers."

That positive belief in students is at the corner-

stone of everything that makes this rural western Kentucky school stand out, Whitaker said.

"Farmington is a unique school," Graves County Superintendent Brady Link said. "The atmosphere is extremely positive. The people use the term 'friend' for one another – and that's more than just a word. They have tremendous fellowship and approach work as a team. It starts with the principal. ... Farmington certainly deserves to be named a Blue Ribbon School."

Farmington's leader

Whitaker is in her sixth year as Farmington's principal. Her efforts are visible and infectious.

"She inspires others so much that teachers, staff members, students, parents and the entire community respond with great attitudes, hard work and positive results," Link said. "(She) has a great mind for instruction, and even more importantly, she has a real heart for children. It's obvious she cares. Probably her greatest strength is as a motivator."

Whitaker was honored recently with the national Terrel H. Bell Award for School Leadership by the



Jeana Crosslin, a parent volunteer and reading coach at Farmington, uses the school library to listen to primary student Macie Morgan read.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Farmington Principal Denise Whitaker takes time out during a visit to Bobbi Fulcher's primary classroom to help student Emily Glover follow along with the instruction.

U.S. Department of Education. The award recognizes today's outstanding school leaders and the vital role they play in overcoming difficult circumstances.

Whitaker's best attributes go beyond how she gets into each classroom and works to help teachers become better teachers, according to Jones, the upper primary teacher.

"She works very long hours," Jones said, "but her enthusiasm and love for kids is so contagious that it makes us want to do the same. The other thing that pops into my mind is her knowledge of every child and his or her family. She knows every family member that walks through our doors and makes them feel welcome."

Focused on reading

There's a short sentence on Page 11 of the school's Blue Ribbon application that speaks volumes about Farmington's curriculum and, in a sense, its identity: "We schedule reading time and then the rest of the day."

Whitaker said reading is the focus of a Farmington education, and students have access to more than just

their teachers when they want to hone reading skills.

Sixth-graders sometimes tutor younger readers, and the community gets involved on a grander scale.

"This is by far one of our best programs at our school," Whitaker said of the community reading coaches. "A volunteer comes to school once a week to talk and read with one child for 20 minutes. The child's eyes light up when the volunteer appears at the door. The one-on-one attention motivates the children and makes them feel special."

Volunteers include grandparents, retired teachers, bus drivers, ministers, community leaders and housewives like Nancy Hamilton, who works with existing primary student Colt Woods.

"It is a good feeling to work with a child and see him improve his reading skills," Hamilton said. "Colt always has a smile on his face when I open the door. We walk down to the library, and as we walk we talk about what has been going on since my last visit."

Once in the library, Colt will read to Hamilton. She reads to him on

This is the second profile in a series about the five 2007 Kentucky Blue Ribbon Schools. The March issue of *Kentucky Teacher* will feature Great-house/Shryock Traditional Elementary (Jefferson County), followed by profiles in later issues on Sorgho and Whitesville elementary schools (Davies County). Highlands High School (Fort Thomas Independent) was profiled in the December 2007/January 2008 issue.

special occasions.

The reading program has really paid off. According to teacher Diane Wiggins, her daughter, Elizabeth, improved two grade levels in eight months. "Our reading coach program gives that extra attention to kids who need it most at just the right age," Wiggins said. "I am very thankful for the program, both as a teacher and as a parent."

Elizabeth worked with a reading coach in primary. "I really liked reading with her one-on-one," Elizabeth, now in the 5th grade, said. "She explained everything to me, which helped with my comprehension. I enjoyed the individual attention, which boosted my confidence."

Farmington is a family

At Farmington, education and concern for each student don't end when the day's final bell rings.

Routinely, teachers begin the school year with home visits to roughly half the students. This helps strengthen the bond between teacher, parents and students.

The home visit is a time for parents to speak to teachers in their own comfort zones, according to Whitaker. "We tell them communication is the key, and then we listen to them as they tell us how we can meet their children's needs," the principal said. "Teachers leave knowing more about the child and are able to understand the students' lives better."

Teachers also ride school buses to better see their students outside the classroom.

"We set high expectations for every child and work until we find a way for each to meet those expectations," Whitaker said. "We are a family and a team. We believe every person must be passionate about helping children learn and grow. From a bus driver to an experienced teacher, every smile and pat on the back is important to the success of our children."

MORE INFO ...

www.graves.k12.ky.us/schools/farmington

Learning Chinese leads students toward global society

By Susan Riddell

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At Cox's Creek Elementary School (Nelson County), primary students are greeting Miss Kuki (pronounced cookie) with a bow and a "Ni Hao" (knee-how), meaning "hello," before she begins their lesson on the Chinese New Year.

At nearby Old Kentucky Home Middle School, students are participating in similar, yet slightly more advanced, lessons in Mrs. Xuefei's (Shoo-fay's) classroom.

Down the road, Mrs. Sun is placing students at Nelson County High School into groups as they go over even-more-advanced Chinese vocabulary.

Nelson County school district's P-12 world language curriculum is just one example of how world language study is changing and expanding in Kentucky schools. Years ago, French, Spanish and Latin were the only languages offered in most Kentucky schools. That's changing, especially as education leads students to take their places in a broader global society.

Nelson County isn't the only Kentucky district teaching Chinese. Three native-speaking teachers are introducing Marion County students to Chinese as early as the

elementary level. Jessamine, Clark, Madison, Boone, Jefferson and Fayette counties and Covington Independent school districts offer it as well, according to Kentucky Department of Education World Language and International Education Consultant Jacque Van Houten.

A language for all levels

A year ago, Nelson County brought in a Chinese teacher to teach elementary students. The experience went so well Superintendent Janice Lantz decided to up the stakes.

"The children just loved it," Lantz said. "Because they did, and that one school seemed to benefit so much, we brought three teachers this year. It has become quite a program for us. We're finding wonderful excitement about it."

Zhu Haina (Miss Kuki to faculty and students at Cox's Creek Elementary) and Leng Xuefei, a middle school teacher, rotate among several Nelson County schools this year. Lijuan Sun teaches Chinese I and Chinese culture classes at Nelson County High School. According to Lantz, the Chinese I class is a dual-credit course that allows students to receive college credit for their work.

Haina's lessons for her elementary

students focus on the basics, but she says her students learn quickly. "Some people think it would be much easier for the younger ages to learn a new language than elder ones," she said. "They surprised me for their enthusiasm in learning Chinese and (they have) outstanding memories. Almost all of them remembered how to call mom, dad, brother, sister in Chinese by one class."

"They are so interested in my classes that I could tell from their eyes that they are eager for learning more about China," she added.

"I like to learn about the food and how to talk in Chinese," primary student Halle Halgash said. "Where there are a lot of people – like Wal-Mart – I can go say 'hello' to everyone in Chinese. I taught my parents how to say 'hello,' too."

Saying "hello" is only the beginning for Halle and her classmates. This early introduction to the language is beneficial to their developing a deeper understanding of



Photo by Tom Dekel, The Kentucky Standard

Lijuan Sun, left, Zhu Haina and Leng Xuefei are helping prepare Nelson County students for the global society in which they will live, said Superintendent Janice Lantz. The teachers provide Chinese language classes for P-12 students, including a Chinese I class that offers dual credit for college.

Chinese, both linguistically and culturally. "If students can learn Chinese in elementary school all the way through high school, it's possible for them to master Chinese well and know Chinese culture better," Xuefei said. "As we know, a person can't learn a new language in one or two months."

And, Sun adds, younger children "know nothing about the language and the country, so when they learn something new, it's exciting and it will arouse their interest in the language and the country. They are eager to understand more."

Language needed at all levels

Nelson County High School senior Derrick Morris, who took French for two years, enjoys taking Chinese I because it's something different. He enjoys hearing about Sun's experiences in China.

"It's interesting," he said. "I've learned a lot about the culture, and it's good to experience another culture. I've thought about working for the FBI some day and learning another language can only help that."

He also knows, however, he's not going to learn enough Chinese in one school year to be fluent in the language.

"If I had started real early, in elementary school, I'd know a whole lot more," Morris said. "I still don't know enough to carry on a conversation in Chinese, but if I had Chinese growing up, I could do it."

Van Houten, the Department of Education consultant, said there is a growing need for world languages to be taught as early as elementary school. "People confuse 'language exposure' and 'language learning,'" she said. "Exposure to a language, just like exposure to mathematics or science, will not result in proficiency. Kentucky, like the rest of the U.S., needs people who can speak, read and write a variety of languages at high levels."

"We have too few elementary and middle schools offering solid language programs and a very, very small number of districts offering early-start, sustained sequential programs through high school," Van Houten added.

Moving to a global society

It's time to think outside the U.S. box, so to speak, according to Superintendent Lantz. That's a big reason she loves the idea of having Chinese in the elementary, middle and high school levels in Nelson County.

"As of next year, the numbers are reflecting that China will have more English-speaking children than the U.S. will have," Lantz said. "Chinese children are required to learn English starting in the 3rd grade. They are getting ready for a global society, and we want our children to be ready, too."

Sun has seen Chinese children prosper from learning English.

"They have advantages when they live and work in the future," she said. "They can freely communicate and trade with people from other countries, and they can also travel around the world easier. It's easy for them to become more global because they know how to get into the global world."

Xuefei agrees. "The great development of China has had a big impact on the world," she added. "I believe this situation will continue. Chinese people will have wide communication with the people all over the world, including American people. American students will have more chances to communicate with Chinese people. ... If they learn Chinese, they will feel more comfortable and confident when they are with Chinese people, no matter if they are chatting, studying or doing business."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Cox's Creek Elementary students Ethan Unseld, left, Halle Halgash and Stephen Clark hold a set of banners as teacher Zhu Haina explains to her primary class how the banners are used to decorate the doorway of a home during Chinese New Year.

Civic Network tackles improving civics education and engagement

By Natalie Stiglitz
University of Louisville

Why should Kentucky students study civics?

"We need to know our rights in the Constitution, what laws to obey and how our government works," a McCreary County High School student replied.

However, a national representative sample of students across the nation is not demonstrating that students have acquired the knowledge and skills of democratic institutions and ideals necessary to become informed citizens in shaping America's future. The 2006 U.S. Department of Education Nation's Report Card on Civics revealed that only about 25 percent of students tested in 4th, 8th and 12th grades had a proficient knowledge of civics and government.

In Kentucky, statewide results from the social studies portion of the 2007 Kentucky Core Content Test (KCCT), in which government and civics make up 20 percent to 30 percent of the social studies assessment, showed that 61 percent of elementary students were proficient or distinguished, 52 percent of middle school students were proficient or distinguished and 43 percent of high school students were proficient or distinguished. The KCCT assesses only student knowledge and skills. Data is not available on student civic engagement.

In an effort to keep social studies education, specifically government and civics, a priority in Kentucky schools and to promote civic participation among citizens throughout the state, Secretary of State Trey Grayson began a statewide civic literacy initiative in 2003. Part of the initiative created a partnership between the Kentucky Department of Education and the University of Louisville to provide professional development to P-12 social studies/civic educators.

The Kentucky Teacher Network on Excellence in Civic Education and Engagement is an outgrowth of that partnership. The Civic Network is a collaboration of the Office of Civic Education and Engagement, located within the U of L College of Education and Human Development, the Department of Education and the Kentucky Workgroup on Civic Education and Engagement.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Teacher Julie Kuhnhein helps Matt Keeler, a senior at Highlands High School (Fort Thomas Independent), and other students in her senior government class participate in an online poll prior to the November state and local elections. After casting votes, students could use the computer program to compare their votes to those of students in other participating schools. Kuhnhein has been involved in the state's civic initiative since 2003.

The Civic Network provides opportunities for P-12 civic educators to come together in professional learning communities to enhance and deepen their knowledge and skills in civic education and engagement.

Julie Kuhnhein, a social studies teacher at Highlands High School (Fort Thomas Independent) has been a part of the initiative since 2003. "The state's effort has moved from a civic education wish list to concrete developments with civic education standards-based units of study and assessment items that can easily be used in Kentucky classrooms," she said.

The Civic Network emphasizes enhancing content knowledge and applying civics content to best practices in the areas of curriculum, instruction and assessment. Network members meet throughout the year both face-to-face and through a free online environment.

The online environment provides opportunities for teachers across the state to chat with one another. Members also can access and share curriculum, instruction, assessment, content resources and profes-

sional-development opportunities.

Currently, the Civic Network focuses on designing standards-based units of study at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Special emphasis has been placed on completing the high school work first so the units can be used beginning this spring semester.

Donna Shouse is a Department of Education social studies consultant and liaison to the Civic Network. "By focusing on what students should know and be able to do by the end of high school, we can design the middle and elementary SBUS (standards-based units of study) very systematically," she said.

Teachers are designing high school units to be used in a variety of social studies courses: Integrated Social Studies, U.S. History and World Civilizations. The units also can be used for a government or civics course, Shouse said.

Teachers are using Grant P. Wiggins and Jay McTighe's "Understanding by Design" planning principles to design each unit. Lessons in each unit include Carol A. Tomlinson's differentiated instruction, student use of technology,

content presented from multiple perspectives, formative and summative assessments, and opportunities for students to be engaged with local and state governments and their communities.

After playing a role in designing units and implementing them, Emma Thacker, a Scott County High School teacher, said, "I've learned that designing standards-based units – so that teachers can just pick them up and understand their intent – is very time-consuming, yet worthwhile because they are easy to implement and are meaningful for students. I can see the lessons within the units we've designed are very engaging for my students.

"This shows us that, as a rule, if teachers take the time to plan meaningful units – keeping the end goal in mind – students CAN be engaged with civics content. The students really remember these lessons," she added.

More than 250 teachers are members of the Civic Network. As members, they have online access to all training materials, resources and products developed by the net-

work. These resources include standards-based lesson plans, units of study, content resources and assessment items.

Part of the Civic Network's mission is for educators to share resources. Teachers who attend network trainings often collaborate in developing and sharing products using the online community.

"It has been a real pleasure working with the high school pilot design team," said Cindy Stilwell, a Daviess County High School social studies teacher. "I believe each of us has grown professionally from our association. I've been teaching for 13 years now and have participated in precious few endeavors that I feel have helped me grow professionally and that immediately impacted my classroom like those the Civic Network has offered."

These standards-based units of study are available through the online community:

- High school
 - Forms and Powers of Government
 - Origins and Branches of Government
 - Federalism
- 8th grade
 - Redefining American Representative Democracy
- 5th grade
 - Formation of American Government
 - Rights and Responsibilities
- 4th grade
 - Formation of Kentucky Government

Teachers can learn more about the Civic Network during the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, March 6-7 in Louisville. (Learn more about the conference on Page 16.) Members of the Civic Network will present a one-and-a-half-hour workshop for P-12 teachers on creating more democratic classrooms. The workshop will show teachers how to use technology, accountable talk and Socratic seminar as part of their instruction.

(Natalie Stiglitz is director of the Office of Civic Education and Engagement at the University of Louisville.)

MORE INFO ...

<http://louisville.edu/education/civics>

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Teachers get fit, set example for students

By Susan Riddell

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Frankfort High School (Frankfort Independent) senior Ryan Moore wanted to get into shape to look her best for prom and graduation this spring. She also wanted help with diet and exercise to keep her motivated.

She didn't have to look far for the help.

Two faculty members helped her set up a workout buddy program. Now, Moore goes to nearby Second Street Elementary School an hour a day and works out with Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) Director Jill Sutton.

"I wanted to lose weight for prom and graduation," Moore said. "It turned into a class. I work out, and we document what I do and how much I progress. We started out three days a week, but now I come every day."

Moore earns credit for working with Sutton as part of a mentoring class.

Her clothes are becoming looser.

"I really feel it working," Moore said. "I feel better throughout the day if I've worked out in the morning, and it's way easier with Mrs. Sutton pushing me. It would be harder to stick with it without her."

Sutton said Second Street teachers and staff hope to partner with more students in the near future. "Teachers can identify students they'd like to work with," Sutton said. "When you look in the newspaper, every day you see articles about childhood obesity. As adult educators, there are ways we can help our students with this problem."

Second Street has a facility in place to begin a bigger program. School district officials moved 7th- and 8th-graders from Second Street to the Frankfort High School campus this school year to create Frankfort Middle School. Teachers transformed a large, empty room in the elementary building into a wellness center. Some students and a few parents use the facility, and it's where Sutton helps Moore work out in the mornings.

Teacher wellness center benefits students, too

Thanks in large part to money from various grants, the wellness center contains three elliptical machines, a treadmill, a strength-training machine featuring 35-40 exercises, a cardio/glide machine, hand weights, sit-up bar, floor mat, exercise balls and punching bag. There are health magazines scattered about the room.

The room can be used any time. Most teachers work out during their planning periods or after school.

"It's mainly used for staff right now," 21st Century Program Coordinator Kay Quire said. "You feel better, you look better and it carries over into the classroom. With the wellness center here and readily available, it encourages the staff to make better use of it."

"I work out six days a week and at least four or five days here. I've been fortunate to lose a little weight. I never used to work out before. I didn't know how to use the

machines. But now, I really enjoy it. I don't like to go a day without working out."

Approximately 30 staff members use the facility and pay a quarterly \$10 fee. "It's easy to come in here and work out," Sutton, the FRYSC director, said. "Plus, we're modeling for the students. They see a lot of us dressed in our workout clothes, and they know where we're going."

"We're doing this for ourselves," Principal Rich Crowe added, "but this indirectly affects the kids. We've been given the go-ahead to open up to the Frankfort Independent community, but we'll have to staff it, and safety is still an issue. We would like to allow students to come in on a supervised basis. Granted, they won't be able to use the treadmill, but they can use the mat, do sit-ups, etc. Those are things we're looking at for the future."

The faculty members have the option to pay extra to work with a certified trainer who comes in once a week to talk about healthy eating habits and demonstrate new exercises. The trainer also encourages a group-effort approach to fitness and weight loss. "It's a good learning opportunity, and we have a good dialogue with each other," Sutton said.

Staff members also exercise together outside the facility. Crowe said 26 staff members recently completed a 5K walk/run together.

"I hope the students at Second Street feel inspired to be fit and in good shape," said Moore, the Frankfort High student. "The teachers are setting a good example for them."

Others getting fit, too

One year ago, Bowling Green Independent Schools completed the "Purples' Employee Wellness Program." It was an eight-week venture for staff members to get healthy and be examples to students.

Schools in the district competed as teams for the most weight loss. Individuals did a variety of wellness activities like keeping daily food diaries, exercising at least 90 minutes a week and attending mini healthy-living classes at their schools.

Leslie Peek, public relations

coordinator for the district, said more than 215 (nearly 40 percent) of the district's employees participated in at least one of the four components.

This year, the district is looking for ways to improve the program for future years.

"We are working to provide a wellness program that will help faculty and staff measure, manage and monitor health by guiding them in choices that will help them live healthier lifestyles," Peek said. "It is not a weight-loss or exercise program, rather a means of providing information and resources to better understand individual needs."

Peek said wellness representatives are encouraging employees to join walking clubs and yoga classes that could be implemented within each school in the future. "We are still researching programs and initiatives we could offer to the schools," Peek said.

The Warren County public school district has staff from 19 schools and its central office participating in "Eat Smart, Get Moving."

"We have 237 team members tracking daily consumption of whole grains, dairy, fruits and vegetables, and exercise," said Gina Howard, director of food service and nutrition for Warren County Schools.

After three months, the Warren County teams are turning in outstanding numbers. The district team charted more than 11,000 servings of fruits and vegetables. Combining their totals, teams also have walked far enough to get from Bowling Green to Juneau, Alaska, with 415 miles to spare.

"Our employee wellness program is about feeling our best and helping kids make good decisions about health," Howard said.

"I am so glad I jumped on board this program," said Devonna Driver, area coordinator for the Warren County schools' Transportation Department. "It has given me extra willpower to lose weight. I have lost 30 pounds and feel great. I'm thankful for the added incentive to get back on track and get healthy."



Photo by Amy Wallitt

Ryan Moore, a senior at Frankfort High School (Frankfort Independent), right, works out with hand weights while her workout buddy, Family Resource and Youth Services Center Director Jill Sutton, does leg exercises on a strength-training machine during one of their daily exercise sessions at Second Street Elementary School.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Teaching up a storm

Bill Meck, chief meteorologist for WLEX-TV in Lexington, uses Mercer County Elementary students Will Rogers and Jessica Goodlett to demonstrate thunder and lightning for a group of 4th-graders. Like meteorologists at many television stations across the state, Meck offers interactive weather lessons to schools in his central Kentucky viewing area. In the eight years Meck has been presenting "Bill's Weather 101," he has reached more than 50,000 students with fun and entertaining lessons on weather.

E.ON offers energy and public safety classroom resources at all grade levels

E.ON U.S. LLC, the parent company of Louisville Gas and Electric Co. and Kentucky Utilities Co., offers lessons about energy and public safety on its "Kids Connection" Web site. All lessons incorporate Kentucky Core Content, specifically 4th-grade energy content in science, and many are supplemented by videos, classroom activities and projects, and safety messages geared toward different grade levels.

The Electric Universe (www.eon-us.com/electricuniverse) offers more than 400 pages of educational resources for teaching about electri-

city. Energy Underground (www.eon-us.com/energyunderground) is designed for learning about natural gas.

The "Energy Scene Investigators" online video follows an energy-savvy team as members examine and solve an electrical danger case and a natural gas case. The video is suitable for grades P-8 and is targeted for grades 4 and 5. Free copies of the video can be ordered online (www.eon-us.com/kids/videos.asp).

The company's mascot, Louie the Lightning Bug, teaches primary students about the dangers of electricity. MiniCity is a live dem-

onstration that helps 4th- and 5th-graders understand the dangers of electricity and how to recognize and handle hazardous electrical situations.

Teachers can schedule a school appearance for MiniCity or Louie the Lightning Bug by contacting the companies' public safety offices.

MORE INFO ...

www.eon-us.com/kids/default.asp

Contact: LG&E and KU public safety scheduling line at (800) 786-7547, public.safety@eon-us.com

Education facts and statistics are online

"Kentucky Education Facts," a document compiled each year by the Kentucky Department of Education, may never have been more important to Kentucky educators as this year. The fact sheet provides a handy, quick reference tool for people looking for basic statistical information about Kentucky public schools to make informed decisions in this season of state budget cuts.

Data on the fact sheet is the most recent available, which is the 2006-07 school year and Fiscal Year 2006-07, unless otherwise noted. "Kentucky Education Facts" is available on the Department of Education Web site (www.education.ky.gov).

The fact sheet provides information about the number of school districts and public schools, how many people the districts employ and how many students attend Kentucky public

schools. Demographic breakdowns are given for some categories. There also is information about the number of home schools in Kentucky.

Funding and attendance information about preschool and primary programs, exceptional children and gifted and talented services, Title I programs, and limited English proficiency services can be found on the fact sheet.

State and federal funding information on the fact sheet shows how much schools receive through Supporting Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK), per-pupil spending and federal education revenue.

A section provides data on computer use in schools and the Internet-based learning services used by schools, such as EncycloMedia and Kentucky Vir-

tual High School classes.

Information also is available on support services to schools and districts provided by the Department of Education and programs like Family Resource and Youth Services Centers, Community Education and Extended School Services. There is data about local school boards, school councils and pupil transportation.

The nonacademic data for 2005-06 lists the state dropout rate, retention rate, attendance rate, graduation rate and percentage of high school graduates entering postsecondary studies, the work force or military.

MORE INFO ...

www.education.ky.gov – Click on "KDE QuickLinks" in the left-hand menu. Scroll down and select "Kentucky Education Fact Sheet."

Kentucky schools have high-speed connections

Kentucky public schools are now

connected to the Kentucky Education Network (KEN), giving students greater access from their classroom computers to the Internet. KEN provides increased bandwidth to all school districts and improves the speed in which information, applications and communi-

cations are shared.

The implementation of KEN makes Kentucky the first state to connect all P-12 public school districts and public postsecondary institutions on one seamless education-centric high-speed network. Teachers, administrators and students can share learning content and resources throughout the P-20 education community.

The goal of KEN is to provide the state's 174 school districts with equal access to high-speed Internet that is reliable, secure and cost-effective. Among the technology features to which KEN will give students unprecedented, speedy access are the Kentucky Virtual School system, online testing, the Individual Learning Plan, online tutoring services, the GoHigher KY portal, online advising services, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System's course catalog and application, Kentucky Educational Television's EncycloMedia and a lifelong learning portal.

The 2006 Kentucky General Assembly allocated \$70 million to build KEN and to provide an Instructional Device Upgrade for public schools' technology pro-

grams. These initiatives are providing new ways to support the diverse instructional needs of students and to prepare them for the 21st century.

According to *Education Week* magazine in 2005, Kentucky teachers outpaced the rest of the nation in the area of incorporating the Internet into instruction. In 2007, the magazine identified Kentucky as one of the top two states at integrating technology into curriculum and classrooms.

Kentucky teachers indicated in a recent survey that access speed to the Internet is a significant factor affecting their use of technology for instructional and learning efforts.

KEN opens faster access to more educational opportunities for all students and will help prepare them for the technology of tomorrow.

In 1995, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to have every public school district connected to the Internet with what was considered then to be a "high-speed" connection. In 2000, Kentucky became the first state to have all schools connected to the Internet by a true "high-speed" connection.

Jefferson County programs remove barriers for teen mothers

By Matthew Tungate

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Cesaley Britton is an 18-year-old Jefferson County senior who has been accepted early to the University of Louisville. While that is admirable, it's not especially remarkable until you consider that she has attended the South Park Teenage Parent Program (TAPP) for nearly two years.

She credits the love and care she has received at TAPP and a program at the school, Project SMART, for encouraging her to go to college.

"People look at us like we're going to fail and we're not going to make it," Britton said. "But I know plenty of people that go to regular school, and I got a better ACT score than them. I've already been accepted to a college. When people found out I got pregnant, they were like, 'She ain't going to do nothing.' But I'm doing so much more than all my friends."

TAPP helps remove barriers for teenage parents that might keep them from completing their education by providing a nurturing environment for the students and their children. Caring educators who seize every opportunity to involve community resources in student success and programs like Project SMART (Science Math and the Right Technology) are ensuring that each student has her chance to excel in life.

Project SMART

A \$1 million, four-year grant from the Women's Educational Equity Act funds Project SMART. It provides teenage mothers with advanced technology and experiences in the classroom to enhance their skills in mathematics, science and technology.

Project SMART allows students to participate in job shadowing, mentoring, college visits and self-esteem workshops, plus regular personal growth meetings every other week. It also provides computers, graphing calculators and other equipment for students to use.

This is the third year of the grant at TAPP, which is one school with campuses at South Park and Westport. Project SMART is open to students grades 9-12. There are 42 students at South Park TAPP and 36 at Westport TAPP in the program,



Photos by Amy Wallot

Cesaley Britton, a senior at South Park TAPP, front left, receives congratulations from Jaye Bittner, Project SMART manager, back left, Rep. Larry Clark and University of Louisville President James Ramsey during their visit to the school. The mother of a 2-year-old son, Britton has already been accepted at U of L next fall.

said Project Manager Jaye Bittner.

"This school was phenomenal before Project SMART came," Bittner said. "However, this has given the students the impetus to say, 'Hey, maybe I can do this. Maybe I can achieve.'"

Courtney Brown, a 16-year-old senior has attended the school for less than a year, but she said TAPP

has made a world of difference for her. She said her grades were bad before she transferred to TAPP.

Now, "I'm taking 12 classes, and I've got straight As. Everybody here loves us and even our babies. You hear people talk bad about their schools, but I would never say anything bad about TAPP," Brown said.

That is how Principal Sara York wants students to feel. York, who has been principal for both campuses of the TAPP school for 14 years, said TAPP annually serves 500 to 600 girls in grades 6-12.

"Our whole purpose here is to prevent school dropout," she said.

Each TAPP campus has its own on-site clinic, which includes OB/GYN, well-child and family-planning services. Because of the medical staff, students can return to school 10 days after childbirth, and the school sends teachers to the girls' homes three days each week they are out.

When students return, their babies come with them. Each TAPP campus has a childcare center with room for more than 100 children ages 10 days to 3 years old. The school has social workers, called student advocates, who help students become more self-sufficient and work with emotional

issues, housing and counseling.

"There is no way you can concentrate on Shakespeare if your parents kicked you out the night before and you don't know where you're going to spend the night," York said. "There's no way that you can concentrate on exponential functions if you don't have money for your baby to eat."

Academically, the school offers opportunities other schools don't, including Project SMART. Another is Project Laptop, Bittner's brainchild, which provided free laptop computers to 10 girls who went to college, university or technical school last year.

To make it happen, Bittner contacted the Louisville Metro Council, which gave her \$5,000 for Project Laptop. She worked with Circuit City and was able to purchase 10 \$1,200 laptops for \$500 each. Bittner would like to double the number this year.

Legislators in Learning

Last fall, Larry Clark, speaker pro tem of the Kentucky House of Representatives, sent a back-to-school e-mail greeting to all Jefferson County principals. York replied to his message with an invitation to visit TAPP.

Clark accepted and suggested that he bring along Rep. Ron Weston, whose district includes South Park TAPP.

Clark and Weston spoke to the students at South Park TAPP in October and invited them to become part of a program called "Legislators in Learning." Through the program, students learn about bill writing and the legislative process, testify at a committee meeting (TAPP students will talk about the need to fund Project Laptop and Project SMART), and watch the House floor proceedings during the 2008 session.

"I was really impressed with the TAPP program," Clark said. "It touched my heart seeing those young girls and seeing their children there and seeing how much it's helped."

York has been concerned about what will happen when Project SMART funding runs out. After visiting the school, Weston prefiled a bill for the 2008 General Assembly that would appropriate \$500,000 over the next two years to continue funding Project SMART.

"The reward we will get is knowing that we made a difference in some people's lives that needed just a little help, and also knowing that those precious babies' mothers are going to have a chance to make their lives better," Clark said.

In addition to "Legislators in Learning," Clark talked to York and Bittner about how the schools could expand postsecondary educational opportunities for TAPP students.

"TAPP has an unusual support network for our students that disappears upon graduation," York said. "With continued support, our students have a much better chance of obtaining a college degree."

Clark suggested the schools develop a partnership with Project Women at the University of Louisville. Project Women is a collaborative outreach that helps disadvantaged women receive a college education. It provides housing and childcare at U of L.

York and Bittner met in December with the two legislators, U of L President James Ramsey and Jefferson County Schools Superintendent Sheldon Berman to establish a program specifically for TAPP students to increase admittance and success for each student.

"The fact that our students have captured the attention of Dr. Ramsey, Dr. Berman, Speaker Clark and Rep. Weston is humbling, yet exhilarating," York said. "Our students' chances of graduating and becoming self-sufficient, highly employable members of this community will increase exponentially because of this collaborative effort."

MORE INFO ...

www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Programs/LEEP/smart.html

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Jaye Bittner, Project SMART grant manager, (502) 485-8347, jaye.bittner@jefferson.kyschools.us



Courtney Brown, a 16-year-old South Park TAPP senior, plans to enter U of L next fall and study biochemistry to provide a future for her 6-month-old daughter Cameron Garvin.

Meet Joe Brothers, state board chair

The Kentucky Board of Education makes a lot of decisions that impact teachers, administrators and students in public schools throughout the state. The board appoints the commissioner of education, develops and adopts the regulations governing the state's education system, sets standards for local school districts to meet, sets policy for the Department of Education, reviews the department's budget requests and makes recommendations on school funding to the governor and legislature. Its management of school programs ranges from interscholastic athletics to the operation of the Kentucky School for the Deaf and the Kentucky School for the Blind to community education programs and services.

The men and women from across the state who are shaping public education in Kentucky are often known only as the state board. However, they are 11 individuals from diverse backgrounds who share a common bond in their passion for improving student achievement in Kentucky public schools.

In the coming months, *Kentucky Teacher* will introduce readers to the board members and allow them to talk informally about their work for education in Kentucky in a series of questions and answers.

This issue, the spotlight is on Wilburn Joe Brothers, chairman of the board. The Elizabethtown resident was appointed to the board in 2006. Members of the board elected him board chair in August 2007.

Brothers is plant manager for the Gates Corp.'s Elizabethtown plant. He is a graduate of Community High School in Unionville, Tenn., and the University of Alabama in Huntsville where his major was engineering.

Brothers is a past PTA president and local school board member. He has served as an officer with the Kentucky School Boards Association, Polyurethane Manufacturers Association and the National Management Association. His term on the state board of education expires in 2010.

Brothers has provided the following answers to questions posed by *Kentucky Teacher* staff.

Why is what you do as a board member important to students today?

The relevance of the role of board members to students today is intertwined with the Kentucky Board of Education's vision for elementary and secondary education. The board's vision is summarized in its strategic plan as: "Every Child: Proficient and Prepared for Success!"

The achievement of this vision requires the coordination of the many "stakeholder" resources to ensure that the educational process is fair, equitable, challenging and state-of-the-art. And, ultimately, the desired output from the process is students ready to assume productive roles in society by moving beyond high school into post-secondary education, or alternatively, successfully entering the workplace. It is the board's, and likewise each board member's, responsibility to ensure that the appropriate policies and directions are in place to facilitate the achievement of

the goal of every child being prepared for success.

Where is education in Kentucky headed in your opinion?

Elementary and secondary education in Kentucky is at a crossroads. Will we finish the KERA mission begun in 1990 by ensuring that every child is successfully educated and inte-



Brothers

grated into a productive societal role, or will we accept some lesser outcome? I believe that we have the will, professional educators, and aspiring students and parents to achieve the mission of preparing every child to be a significant contributor to a growing and thriving economy and a significant participant in a society that models the best democratic principles of governance. We will complete the mission and move on to even higher levels of success!

What long-term goals do you have as a member of the board?

My desire is to be an informed, productive board member contributing to an effective team effort to ensure that Kentucky children receive a world-class education.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Mr. Herbert Cooper was my favorite teacher! He taught algebra, geometry, science, physics and shop. It was difficult to find students and teachers interested in many of these courses, even at the dawn of the space age almost five decades ago.

He labored in a rural, under-educated Southern community for minimal compensation. In the absence of adequate resources, he cut geometric figures from potatoes to teach the basic principles of geometry and used similarly innovative approaches to inspire and propel on their way a number of future scientists and engineers from our little school.

What has the board done most to help teachers during your time on the board?

The hiring of a commissioner that understands Kentucky's people, KERA, the education stakeholders, the progress we have achieved in Kentucky and the methodologies necessary to support teachers in the classroom as they take us to proficiency in 2014.

What's something you have learned from another board member that has had a profound effect on you?

I have learned much from each of our board members, but I think the realization of the diversity of our commonwealth from demographic and cultural viewpoints has been the most profound thing that I have tried to absorb from my peers on the board.

What have you gained from your public service as a state and/or local school board member?

I have gained a great sense of accomplishment as I have witnessed thousands of students progressing through our schools and moving on to rewarding roles in society. Also, I have gained a sense of profound respect for our constitutional and democratic processes that empowers citizens to participate at every level in the educational adventure.

What are the greatest successes you have seen in Kentucky public schools?

The greatest success I have seen over the past 40 years is the steady stream of children taught to excel academically, socially and physically by a committed and exemplary work force. There are many noteworthy individual successes along the way, but I believe the totality of what educators do for children cannot be overstated or appreciated.

Other than more money, what do Kentucky public schools need most?

Engaged parents and communities!

What lies beyond "proficiency" in 2014?

I think we have only begun to imagine the possibilities of virtual learning and the virtual classroom. The cyberspace world will change the way we educate people forever. The delivery media through which we educate people is and will change significantly for the first time in recorded history. A new kind of teaching role and educational process will be necessary to accommodate the needs of the future student! Also, the means by which we continue to use schools as melting pots for the good of the community and society as a whole will require our best and most innovative thinking with the advent of the virtual classroom and distance learning.

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

I want all teachers to know that I love and respect them and their work. Additionally, I have tried to follow in my parents' footsteps as a fully engaged and supportive volunteer in the "education army."

Changed your address? Let us know

If you don't want to miss an issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, please take a few moments to learn how to let us know when your address changes.

Kentucky Teacher receives mailing addresses for all active Kentucky certified classroom teachers and administrators from the Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System. If you are a certified employee of a Kentucky public school, you can change your mailing information in one of two ways:

- Complete a change of address form that can be downloaded from the retirement system's Web site at http://ktrs.ky.gov/01_active_members/B_change_name.htm.
- Submit a written request that includes your name, old address, new address, Social Security number and your signature.

Mail the form or your written request to:
Kentucky Teachers' Retirement System
ATTN: Tammy Brown
479 Versailles Rd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

If you are not a current teacher or administrator, e-mail your change of address to kyteacher@education.ky.gov or by mail to:

Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

251 Kentucky teachers earn NBCT distinction

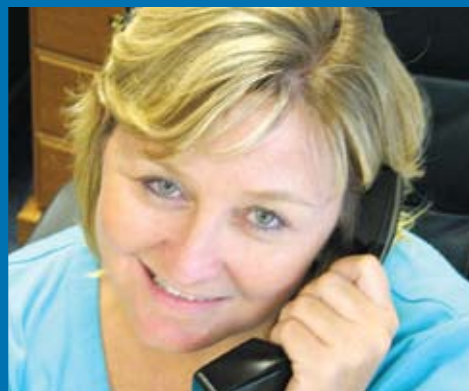
According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 251 Kentucky teachers achieved national board certification in 2007.

Kentucky ranked eighth nationwide in the number of new National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) and is currently 12th in the nation in the total number of teachers who have achieved certification. Florida had the most 2007 board certified teachers with 1,676, while North Carolina leads the way in total number of NBCTs with more than 12,750.

Kentucky has 1,374 NBCTs. According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the state shows a 14 percent increase in the number of teachers who attained national board certification in 2007 over 2006. Fifty-nine percent of the state's NBCTs teach in Title I schools.

Of the 251 new NBCTs in 2007, the Fayette County school district had the highest representation with 18, followed by Jefferson County Public Schools with 16 and Oldham County with 14. In all, 87 of Kentucky's 174 public school districts had at least one teacher become national board certified in 2007.

Talk to Us!



Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov

Phone: (502) 564-2000

Fax: (502) 564-3049

Write: Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

National board certification is a voluntary program and is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete. Teachers build a portfolio that includes student work samples, assignments, videos and a thorough analysis on their knowledge of the subject(s) they teach.

The 2007 NBCTs are listed online at www.nbpts.org/resources/nbct_directory. Sort the list by state and year to see Kentucky's 2007 NBCTs.

20 school districts have 'What Parents Want'

Recently, 20 school districts in Kentucky were given the distinction of being "What Parents Want" by SchoolMatch, the nation's largest school selection consulting firm, based in Columbus, Ohio.

Only 16 percent of the nation's public school districts have been recognized for meeting the needs of families choosing schools. The criteria used for award selection include a close match to what SchoolMatch users most often request. Compilation of more than 97,000 parent questionnaires completed by SchoolMatch clients reveals parents most often look for school systems that are:

- competitive in academic test scores and academically solid, but not so rigorous as to intimidate their children
- accredited
- recognized for excellence by a national foundation or by the U.S. Department of Education
- competitive in teacher salaries
- above average in instructional expenditures on a national percentile basis
- above average in expenditures for library-media services on a national percentile basis
- known for small class size
- ensuring availability of programs at the secondary level

"What Parents Want" award-winning districts are: Beechwood Independent, Boone County, Daviess County, Elizabethtown Independent, Erlanger-Elsmere Independent, Fayette County, Fort Thomas Independent, Franklin County, Hardin County, Jefferson County, Jessamine County, Kenton County, Madison County, McCracken County, Murray Independent, Oldham County, Pikeville Independent, Russell Independent, Warren County and Woodford County.

SchoolMatch is a research and database service company that collects, audits, integrates, processes and manages information about public elementary and secondary schools.



Photo submitted by Barren County Public Schools

Barren County Middle School students Elizabeth Barr, left, Noah Devasher and Caleb Wright get a close look at steel pennies Barren County Schools Superintendent Jerry Ralston brought to their classroom. The pennies sparked students to research and report on copper shortages during World War II.

Classroom instruction is part of Barren superintendent's work

Earlier this school year, students in Nancy Hurt's Barren County Middle School class learned about steel pennies from Superintendent Jerry Ralston.

According to Ralston, he looks forward to classroom visits whenever possible. His work as superintendent of a district of more than 4,500 students challenges him to make time for those visits, but he does.

"It's a joy for me to visit and talk with the students," said Ralston. "We learn from each other and have some fun at the same time. So, I make it a priority."

During the lesson, Ralston explained how, during World War II, there was a major shortage of copper. The U.S. Government was forced to limit the use of copper in the production of various products, including pennies.

Ralston passed out 1943 steel pennies to the students as gifts, which not only fascinated them but also piqued their interest about this important piece of history.

"I've always enjoyed collecting and researching various coins," Ralston said. "Coins are a great source of history if you only look for it. So, I challenged these students to do the research and report back what they learned."

Ralston had the students look into what caused the shortages. He said Hurt later submitted a report to him from the students regarding the historical significance of the steel pennies.

"Copper was used for shell casings, bombs, bullets and guns," the students reported. "The U.S. Government was forced to forgo the copper that was typically used for coins until additional supplies could be found elsewhere. The copper saved by making pennies out of steel was enough to meet the combined needs of two cruisers, two destroyers, 1,242 flying fortresses, 120 field guns and 120 howitzers, or enough for 1,250,000 shells for big field guns."

"This is a very huge piece in the history of the United States," said Hurt. "My students enjoyed getting the special pennies, and we all learned so much through researching the history of steel pennies."

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences

Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum

The Center for the Study of Mathematics Curriculum (CSMC) is hosting an international conference on "Future Curricular Trends in School Algebra and Geometry" May 2-4 at The Field Museum in Chicago. The conference will feature both national and international experts.

www.mathcurriculumcenter.org/conferences/CSMC/index.php

Foundation for Teaching Economics

The Foundation for Teaching Economics (FTE) and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis-Louisville Branch will host "The Right Start: An Institute for New and Beginning Teachers of High School Economics" June 9-12 at Rough River State Resort Park. The program is structured as a business conference with emphasis on economic content appropriate to teaching high school economics. Registration ends May 31.

Contact: KCEE at (800) I DO ECON or info@econ.org

Connecting mathematics to real-life situations

The Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) and Toyota invite teachers (grades 4-8) to attend the "Math: Connections for LIFE" conference July 22 at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky facility in Georgetown. Teachers can learn to tap into the natural creativity of their students with fun, hands-on activities that will have students using a budget to organize a school pizza party, learning how to comparison shop for a cell phone and much more.

Contact: KCEE at (800) I DO ECON or info@econ.org

Kentucky Reading Association

The Kentucky Reading Association will hold its annual fall conference "Literacy for a Lifetime" Sept. 25-27 in Louisville at the Galt House.

Contact: Tammy Board, KRA conference chair, at (859) 749-3814, tammy.board@lincoln.kyschools.us

www.kyreading.org

Events

Alliance for Science essay contest for high school

Alliance for Science is seeking high school students for its annual national essay contest themed "Climate, Agriculture and Evolution." Students must submit original essays and have a sponsoring teacher. The deadline to enter is Feb. 29.

www.allianceforscience.org/essay

PACT summer program

The 2008 Pathways and Access to Careers in Technology (PACT) summer program will be held June 8-14 at Kentucky State University in Frankfort. This year's program is open to students who will have completed the 5th, 6th or 7th grade by June 8. Acceptance is competitive, and a limited number of spaces are available. The application deadline is Feb. 25.

Contact: Rachael Steward at (502) 597-5585, rachael.steward@kysu.edu

Aviation Teacher Institutes

Mathematics, social studies and science teachers or teaching teams in grades 5-12 can participate in the 2008 Kentucky Aviation Teacher Institutes this summer. Level I institutes will be held June 10-12 at Pennyriple State Resort Park, June 17-19 at Natural Bridge State Resort Park and June 24-26 at General Butler State Resort Park. A Level II institute is planned July 1-3 in Frankfort. Topics covered through inquiry/problem-based learning will be applied mathematics (time, speed, distance); aerodynamics (forces and motion); and navigation (map skills). Lodging, one evening meal and training materials will be provided.

Contact: Paige Hankla, (502) 564-4480, phankla@ky.gov

<http://transportation.ky.gov/aviation/education.htm>

Summer Geographic Institute

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance will sponsor a Summer Geographic Institute June 22-27 at Natural Bridge State Resort Park for K-12 social studies and earth sciences teachers. Instructors trained by the National Geographic Society will lead the sessions. Participants receive free resource materials from National Geographic and the Kentucky Geographic Alliance plus lodging, a \$400 sti-

pend for conducting two workshops and a chance to earn college credit.

Contacts: Tom Wilson, tom.wilson@mccracken.kyschools.us or Kay Gandy, kay.gandy@wku.edu

www.kga.org - Click on "What's New" and select "Summer Institute, June 22-27, 2008"

'Life After High School' essay contest

The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is accepting submissions from high school juniors and seniors for its 2008 essay contest, "Life After High School." Essays are due April 11.

Contact: Jennifer Ransom, (216) 579-2025, jennifer.k.ransom@clev.frb.org

www.clevelandfed.org/education/essay08/challenge.cfm

Call for presenters

The Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) and the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) are accepting proposals to present at the 14th annual "Safe Schools, Successful Students Conference" Oct. 6-7 in Louisville. Proposal guidelines, selection criteria and submission forms are available on the KSBA Web site (www.ksba.org) and the KCSS Web site (www.kysafeschools.org). The deadline for submissions is April 19.

Presidential award for mathematics, science

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is the nation's highest and most prestigious honor for teachers of science and mathematics. State winners are recognized at a ceremony in the White House and receive a \$10,000 cash award. The award is open to science and mathematics teachers in grades P-6 for 2008. The application deadline for elementary teachers is May 1.

www.paemst.org

Seminar in Dutch art and culture

Kentucky K-12 teachers can apply for a fellowship to attend a six-day seminar at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., that explores art and culture of the 17th century Dutch Republic. Fellowships include a stipend of \$1,500 for participating in the seminar and an additional \$500 upon submission of a completed fellowship report. Application deadline is March 15.

www.nga.gov/education/teacinst.shtm



Photo by Amy Wallot

Whitesville Elementary (Daviess County)

Lincoln bicentennial update



1809 - 2009

Lincoln moments in the legislature

As part of the state celebration of Abraham Lincoln's bicentennial, the Kentucky Historical Society is providing the 2008 General Assembly with a daily reminder of Lincoln's life in Kentucky through sketches of people and places that touched the president's life while he was in Kentucky. One vignette is posted on the Legislative Research Commission's Web site each day the legislature meets.

MORE INFO ...

www.lrc.ky.gov/record/moments08RS/moments.htm

History Education Conference

The annual summer Kentucky History Education Conference, tentatively scheduled for July 9, will focus on the "Kentucky and Lincoln" theme. General and concurrent sessions provide opportunities for teachers to discuss content, resources and classroom applications on American history events with Kentucky connections.

MORE INFO ...

Contact: Vicky Middleswarth, Kentucky Historical Society, (502) 564-1792, vicky.middleswarth@ky.gov

Lincoln activities gear up for national celebration

The national celebration of the bicentennial of President Abraham Lincoln's birth begins in Kentucky on Feb. 12 at Lincoln's birthplace in Hodgenville. The national historic site will host a huge celebration in which many Kentucky public school students will participate.

During the next two years, events and classroom resources will be available to help students learn more about Kentucky's native son who grew up to be the nation's 16th president. The emphasis of many programs and activities sponsored by state agencies focus on the events during Lincoln's childhood that helped mold a young boy from rural Kentucky into a great orator and the president who would lead the nation through the Civil War.

Lincoln's life in Kentucky will be featured in a new HistoryMobile exhibit. The tractor-trailer traveling exhibit has been redesigned to tell the story of "Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln."

The 300-square-foot exhibit, sponsored by the Kentucky Historical Society, explores Lincoln's frontier childhood, his career from log house to the White House and his struggles to end slavery and lead the nation through the Civil War. The exhibit contains artifacts and images as well as audio, video and interactive elements to appeal to a variety of learners.

The HistoryMobile will visit communities throughout the state



Photo by Amy Wallot

David McElrath, front, and Jake Turner begin construction on the "Kentucky's Abraham Lincoln" display in the 300-square-foot exhibit space of the HistoryMobile. The traveling exhibit premieres at the national Lincoln bicentennial celebration Feb. 12 at the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site in Hodgenville before traveling throughout Kentucky during 2008.

and a limited number of school campuses during the next two years. Pre-visit classroom materials will be available for intermediate and middle school teachers to provide background information and teaching ideas to enhance school group visits to the exhibit.

Scheduled stops for the HistoryMobile during February are:

- Feb. 12, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Hodgenville
- Feb. 14, Capitol Rotunda, Frankfort
- Feb. 20, Highlands Museum, Ashland
- Feb. 22, National Quilt Museum, Paducah
- Feb. 27, Lexington Public Library
- Feb. 29, Frazier International History Museum, Louisville

MORE INFO ...

www.kylincoln.org/events/historymobile.htm

Contact: David Whealdon, (502) 564-1792, ext. 4503, david.whealdon@ky.gov

Grants for school trips and Lincoln-related activities

The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission is providing grants to schools and other organizations planning Lincoln projects during the next two years. Schools are eligible for minigrants (maximum \$350) to help defray the cost of travel to eight Kentucky Lincoln historic sites and for project grants (maximum \$500) for in-school programs. The next deadline for the grants is March 31.

Other grants for Lincoln-related school activities and programs are available from the Kentucky Historical Society, Kentucky Arts Council, Ken-

tucky Heritage Council, Kentucky Humanities Council and the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission. Information about these grant programs is available online at the commission's website.

MORE INFO ...

www.kylincoln.org/grants

www.kylincoln.org/grants/educationgrants.htm

Chautauqua in the Schools performances bring Lincoln era to life

The Kentucky Humanities Council Inc. is making available grants to provide 105 Chautauqua in the Schools performances throughout the state during the coming year. All programs are aligned by grade level for social studies and arts and humanities core content.

For example, teachers can invite "A Visit from Honest Abe" to their classrooms for students to learn through a dramatic presentation about Lincoln's life. Other Lincoln-related performances tell the stories of: "First Lady from Lexington," Mary Todd Lincoln; "No Ordinary Woman," Miss Dinnie Thompson, a former slave who as a free woman worked as a laundress for the Speed family in Louisville; and "Death Before Slavery," Mar-

garet Garner, a runaway slave who killed her daughter rather than see her live in slavery. The Chautauqua catalog offers a total of 21 presentations by characters from Kentucky's past.

Performances are limited to groups of 100 students or less. Schools are responsible for a \$150 booking fee and may need to provide overnight lodging for the presenter. Information about Chautauqua in the Schools and an application form are available online.

MORE INFO ...

www.kyhumanities.org/chschools297.cfm

KTLC 2008 features state and national education experts



By Faun S. Fishback

faun.fishback@education.ky.gov

Collins Lane Elementary Principal Sharla Six has learned to “name and claim” each one of the 465 students in her Franklin County school. Using a data board strategy she adapted from Reading First schools, she uses assessment data to get to know her students, focus on helping them achieve, help teachers improve their instruction for individual students and maximize school resources.

Because using the data board helps her organize assessment data to focus on the special instructional needs of her students, she wants to share the strategy with other principals, instructional coaches and educators who work with large groups of children.

That’s why she became a presenter for the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC 2008) March 6 and 7 at the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville. Her session will begin at 8 a.m. Friday, March 7, in Room 102 of the convention center.

The theme for KTLC 2008 is “Student Learning for the 21st Century – Every Child, Every Day.” By using presenters like Six, the conference has become known as a showcase for excellence in schools and districts across the commonwealth.

The two-day conference focuses on five areas of education: assessment for learning, teacher leadership, closing the achievement gap, successful school culture and technology. Educators throughout the state have suggested these topics to help meet their teaching and learning needs.

Like many of the other Kentucky educators and nationally recognized teachers and administrators who are scheduled to present at KTLC 2008, Six brings a wealth of education experience to her conference session.

A former Reading First state coach and co-coordinator, Six has

17 years in the education profession. She also has been a teacher, literacy consultant, director of instructional support at the Kentucky Educational Development Corp. and an instructional coach/mentor for new teachers.

Kentucky’s fourth commissioner of education, Jon Draud, will open the conference during a reception that begins at 6 p.m. March 5. Draud will speak at 6:45 p.m. A special presentation explaining the Kentucky Education Network (KEN), which gives all 174 Kentucky public school districts access to high-speed Internet connection, follows the commissioner’s speech.

The River City Drum Corp, a group of young people from Jefferson County who are trained in African drumming techniques, will perform at the opening reception. A drawing for a vacation cruise also will be held at the end of the evening’s activities.

Conference sessions and workshops

On Thursday, March 6, a variety of one-and-a-half hour concurrent interest sessions and workshops will be available. The sessions and workshops led by presenters like Six, the elementary principal, begin at 8 a.m.

and continue through 4:30 p.m.

Featured speakers on Thursday include Fred Johnson, Peggy Olcott, Timothy Shanahan, Gordon Shukwit, Tim Tyson, Crystal Kuykendall, Rich Milner, Mychal Wynn and Jim Knight. Their presentations will address the five conference focus areas:

- Johnson, who is a certified school psychologist, will talk about managing disruptive classroom behavior during a Thursday session. On Friday, he will talk about being proactive with chronically despondent students.
- Olcott, a national education consultant, will present a two-part session on coaching, collaborating and consulting on Thursday morning. In the afternoon, she will lead a session titled, “Holding Ideas Instead of Hands: Differentiated Approaches on a Continuum of Interaction.”
- Shanahan, director of the University of Illinois Center for Literacy, will lead two morning sessions on improving reading achievement and leadership and reading.
- Shukwit, director of IT, Learning Technologies and International Strategic Programs for Apple Inc., will talk about emergent digital learning environments.

• Tyson, recently named one of Georgia’s “High-Performance Principals,” will lead two morning sessions on leadership.

• Kuykendall is an educator, attorney and human relations expert who leads Kreative and Innovative Resources for Kids (KIRK). She will share her strategies on bringing out the best in all students.

• Milner is an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University’s Peabody College of Education and Human Development. He will conduct two sessions Thursday focused on student diversity and achievement.

• Wynn is an author and expert in school improvement and student achievement, especially black male achievement. His session will provide strategies for working with identifiable student subgroups to increase student achievement.

• Knight has authored two books on instructional coaching. He will present two sessions about coaching to improve instruction and classroom management.

Also on Thursday, conference-goers can experience a model “Intelligent Classroom” in Room 109 of the convention center. Educators from seven school districts and the Kentucky Department of Education will help teachers and administrators learn more about SMART Boards, classroom performance system “clickers,” podcasting, wireless Internet capabilities, chalkboard tablets, document cameras, audio projecting systems and much more. Presentations will occur in 90-minute sessions and 15-minute vignettes in the Intelligent Classroom.

On Friday, March 7, sessions and workshops will run from 8 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. Featured speakers for the day include Margaret Heritage, assistant director for professional development at the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing at the University of Califor-

nia at Los Angeles, and Rick Stiggins, founder of the Assessment Training Institute in Portland, Ore.

Heritage will talk about what teachers need to know and do with formative assessment. Stiggins will conduct two sessions that address how to use assessments to increase student learning.

Places to network

The Cyber Café and the Exhibit Hall will be open both days of the conference to provide places for conference-goers to network. Concessions will be available in both areas.

The Cyber Café offers a bank of computers from which to check e-mail. The Exhibit Hall features more than 250 vendor booths that display the latest in educational software, textbooks, technology and other classroom resources.

Throughout the conference, there will be several “Passport to Prizes” drawings. Vacation cruises will be given away at the opening reception on March 5 and at 3 p.m. on March 7 in the Exhibit Hall.

Online registration available

Teachers and teams of educators can register online for KTLC 2008 at the conference Web site (www.kentuckytlc.org). The pre-conference registration fee for one educator is \$150 by Feb. 22. Onsite registration also will be available at \$175 per person.

Again this year, the conference provides a registration special for district teams. When five or more educators from the same district register together and submit payment on the same purchase order or credit card, the team receives one free registration.

The Louisville Visitors and Convention Bureau is handling lodging arrangements for KTLC 2008. Information is available at the conference Web site or by calling (800) 743-3100 or sending an e-mail to infostaff@gotolouisville.com.

MORE INFO ...

www.kentuckytlc.org



Photo by Amy Wallot

Sharla Six, principal at Collins Lane Elementary, second from right, and 4th-grade teachers Kimberly Young, left, Valerie Smith and Adam Nance go over assessment information in the school library for the data board they use to watch student progress and focus on each student’s specific instructional needs